

United States Senate

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November 12, 2010

Dear Friend:

As you know, the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform will be making recommendations on December 1, 2010, to reduce the deficit and improve the federal government's long-term fiscal outlook.

There is a growing concern among progressives that this Commission will come up with a plan to reduce the deficit not by asking large, profitable corporations or the wealthiest in our society to begin to pay their fair share, but by cutting the most important and successful federal investments for the middle class, working families, the disabled, seniors on fixed incomes, and veterans. This concern has only been made worse by the recent proposal put forward by the co-chairs of this Commission that would make draconian cuts to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the needs of our veterans, and education, all while reducing tax rates for the wealthy and large, profitable corporations.

Everyone agrees that over the long-term we have got to reduce the record-breaking \$13.7 trillion national debt and unsustainable federal deficit. But, we can and must put forward a plan that does not reduce the deficit on the backs of the shrinking middle class and the least fortunate in our society who have already borne the brunt of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

Unfortunately, up to this point, plans to reduce the deficit most frequently mentioned in the media were either developed by groups that have been financed by wealthy special interests or the extreme right wing. Many of these people have been working for years to make radical cuts to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, investments in education, unemployment insurance and food stamps, while opposing attempts to make the tax code more progressive.

We all know that there are a number of fair and progressive ways to address the deficit crisis that would not harm the middle class and those who have already lost their jobs, homes, life savings and ability to send their kids to college. The time has come to put these proposals into a package so that the progressive view becomes a part of the national discussion.

Therefore, I would like to invite you to a meeting with other organizations and economists representing working families, the elderly and the poor who understand that

in the midst of this terrible recession we are not going to reduce the deficit on the backs of the middle class or the most vulnerable people in our nation.

This meeting will take place on Thursday, November 18th at 3pm in 332 Dirksen. If you would like to attend this meeting, please contact me or Warren Gunnels on my staff at Warren_Gunnels@Sanders.senate.gov or 224-5141.

I hope to see you there.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bernard Sanders", with a stylized, cursive script.

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator